

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 1-16 and add claim 17 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A local network having a ring network configuration with a plurality of subscribers each connected ~~withinto thea~~ ring network by ~~a an~~ optical data line to transmit and receive data therebetween, the local network comprising:

a first subscriber ~~is configured as a data source thatto transmitsprovide~~ compressed audio and video data onto the ring network;

a second subscriber ~~that configured to receives~~ decompressed transmitted audio data;

a third subscriber ~~configured thatto receives the transmitted~~ decompressed video data,

a fourth subscriber that includes

(i) a bit stream decoder that decodes the ~~incoming~~ compressed audio and video data and provides decompressed audio and video data;

(ii) a separation stage that receives ~~saidthe~~ decompressed audio and video data and separates the decompressed audio and video data ~~within said compressed data to provide athe~~ decompressed audio data signal and ~~a the~~ decompressed video data signal; and

(iii) a control unit that controls the transmission of ~~saidthe~~ decompressed audio data signal and ~~saidthe~~ decompressed video data signal onto the ring network.

2. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ where the second subscriber comprises a data sink ~~the bit stream decoder is situated before the separation stage in the data stream of the compressed audio and video data.~~

3. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 12, where the third subscriber comprises a data sink ~~comprising several other data sinks which do not have any bit stream~~

~~decoders and which forward the data conducted to them by the bit stream decoder of the data sink to the output units associated with them.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~where the fourth subscriber comprises a data sink~~the data sink with its bit stream decoder is separate from the other data sinks and is connected through an optical data line.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 14, where the second, third and fourth subscribers each comprise a data sink~~characterized in that the data sink is connected to its associated output unit for reproducing one type of data, through a common optical data line for transmitting audio as well as video data.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 51, where the second, third and fourth subscribers are separate from each other and connected within the ring network by the data line~~characterized in that the bit stream decoder associated with the data sink is situated in the data stream of compressed audio and video data after the separation stage of the data sink, and that at least one other bit stream decoder in the other data sinks decodes the separated data that are transmitted through the optical data line.~~

7. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~where said~~the~~ bit stream decoder comprises an MPEG-1 decoder.

8. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~where the bit stream decoder comprises one of ~~can be configured as an~~ MPEG-1 decoder, an MPEG-2 decoder, an AC-3 decoder, and ~~or an~~ JPEG decoder ~~depending upon the transmitted control data received over the ring network by the bit stream decoder.~~

9. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating ~~reproducing~~ audio and video data in a local network, comprising:

transmitting compressed audio and video data from a data source through ~~an optical~~ data line to a data sink;

receiving ~~said~~the compressed audio and video data;

decompressing the received compressed audio and video data to provide decompressed data;

processing ~~said~~the decompressed data ~~at the data sink~~ to provide decompressed audio data and decompressed video data; and

transmitting ~~said~~the decompressed audio data and ~~said~~the decompressed video data ~~from the data sink~~ onto the local ~~ring~~ network.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, ~~wherein~~where said~~the~~ steps of receiving, decompressing, processing and transmitting occur in the ~~same~~ data sink.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for decompressing audio and video data in a local ring network, comprising the steps of:

at a first data sink, (i) receiving compressed data transmitted along a transmission medium of ~~the~~ a local ring network ~~at a first data sink~~, (ii) processing ~~said~~ the compressed data to provide a decompressed audio signal, and (ii) transmitting ~~said~~ the decompressed audio signal onto the local ring network; and

at a second data sink, (i) receiving the compressed data transmitted along the transmission medium of the local ring network, (ii) processing ~~said~~ the compressed data to provide a decompressed video signal, and (ii) transmitting ~~said~~ the decompressed video ~~audio~~ signal onto the local ring network.

12. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ where ~~said~~ the bit stream decoder comprises an MPEG-2 decoder.

13. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ where ~~said~~ the bit stream decoder comprises an AC-3 decoder.

14. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ where ~~said~~ the bit stream decoder comprises a JPEG decoder.

15. (Currently Amended) The local network of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ where ~~said~~ the bit stream decoder comprises a video decoder and an audio decoder.

16. (Currently Amended) A subscriber unit for use in a local network that includes a data source which provides compressed multimedia data, a first data sink that plays back

decompressed audio data, and a second data sink having a display device that plays back decompressed video data, ~~wherein~~where ~~said~~the subscriber unit, the data source and the first and second data sinks are each connected to a ring network by an ~~optical~~ data line to transmit onto and receive data from the ring network, ~~said~~the subscriber unit comprising:

(i) a bit stream decoder that decodes the compressed audio and video data and provides decompressed data indicative thereof;

(ii) a separation~~ing~~ stage that receives ~~said~~the decompressed data, and separates audio and video data within ~~said~~the decompressed data to provide a decompressed video data signal and a decompressed audio data signal; and

(iii) a control unit that controls the transmission of ~~said~~the decompressed video data signal and ~~said~~the decompressed audio data signal onto the ring network.

17. (New) A local network having a ring network configuration with a plurality of subscribers each connected within the ring network by an optical data line to transmit and receive data therebetween, the local network comprising:

a first subscriber configured as a data source that transmits compressed audio and video data onto the ring network;

a second subscriber that receives the transmitted compressed audio and video data, where the second subscriber includes a separation stage that separates the compressed audio and video data to provide a compressed audio data signal and a compressed video data signal, and a control unit that controls the transmission of the compressed audio data signal and the compressed video data signal onto the ring network;

a third subscriber that receives the compressed audio data signal, where the third subscriber includes an audio bit stream decoder that decodes the compressed audio data signal and provides decompressed audio data, and a unit that reproduces the decompressed audio data; and

a fourth subscriber that receives the compressed video data signal, where the fourth subscriber includes a video audio bit stream decoder that decodes the compressed video data signal and provides decompressed video data, and a unit that reproduces the decompressed video data.